

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-23 and 25-27 are pending. Claims 6, 16 and 24 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute these claims in a continuation application.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al. and Ishizuka. Claim 1 is amended to recite features neither disclosed or suggested by the prior art, namely,

... a cause determination part which determines a cause of image degradation corresponding to the image, based on an evaluation result of the image by the image evaluation part from **a plurality of stored causes of image degradation;**

a question-cause correspondence table including the plurality of causes of image degradation and corresponding questions;

an output part which outputs to a user **a question including information corresponding to another cause of image degradation** of the plurality of stored causes of image degradation based on the question-cause correspondence table ... (Emphasis added).

Basis for amended claim 1 may be found, for example, at page 24, lines 5-10, page 25, lines 3-10, page 28, lines 19-24, page 30, lines 3-7 and Figs. 7 and 10.

Applicant's exemplary embodiment authenticates a user's eye by comparing a image of an eye with a previously stored image of the user's eye. The user is authenticated if parameters of the stored image match parameters of the current image. However, the authentication may not occur if there is no match. That is, authentication may not occur if the current image becomes degraded. Cause determination part 6 includes a cause determination table 91 (shown in Fig. 7) which stores a plurality of causes of image degradation (column 3 of table 91). For example, if the user is wearing glasses, the cause of degradation due to the glasses may be "reflection of light from the glasses" or "the eye image is out of focus because the eyeglass frame is in focus." (Page 25, lines 3-10 and page 30, lines 3-7). Alternatively, the cause of degradation may be "reflection of an object off the cornea

due to external light.” (Page 24, lines 5-10). That is, Applicant’s exemplary embodiment discloses “...**a plurality of stored causes of image degradation,**” as recited in proposed claim 1.

After the cause of degradation is determined, different questions may be outputted to the user from a question-cause correspondence table 92 regardless of the determined cause. (Page 28, lines 19 to page 29, line 3 and Fig. 10). A question from the question-cause correspondence table 92 may include **information corresponding to a cause of image degradation different from the determined cause** to determine if a mismatch occurs. For example, the cause of degradation may be determined to be “reflection of an object off the cornea due to external light.” A question, such as “Are you wearing glasses?” may be outputted to the user from the question-cause correspondence table. (Page 30, line 3 and Fig. 10) This question includes information (glasses) corresponding to **another cause of image degradation**, such as “reflection of light from the glasses” or “the eye image is out of focus because the eyeglass frame is in focus.” That is, output part 7 may output to a user, “... **a question including information corresponding to another cause of image degradation** of the plurality of stored causes of image degradation based on the question-cause correspondence table,” as recited in claim 1.

Applicant’s claimed features of “... an output part which outputs to a user **a question including information corresponding to another cause of image degradation** ...” are advantageous over the prior art because a more accurate threshold may be determined to avoid a mismatch between the causes of image degradation and to determine the actual cause of image degradation. For example, if the user responds that he is wearing glasses, the cause is due to “reflection of light from the glasses” or “the eye image is out of focus because the eyeglass frame is in focus.” Thus, a mismatch is determined between the determined cause of degradation and the answer to the question. (Page 30, lines 1-12). A threshold for determining that the user is wearing glasses may then be changed so that the cause of degradation may be determined to be that the user is wearing glasses. (Page 30, lines 13-20).

Umezawa and Ishizuka do not disclose “questions” of any kind. The Office Action states, however, that “... Wallace teaches an output part which outputs to a

user a question being selected based on the determined cause determination part.” (Office Action, page 4, lines 5-6). Wallace teaches a system for assisting an examinee to improve performance of standardized tests. A preliminary diagnosis of a user’s deficits in knowledge or test taking skills is performed after the user answers a first set of questions on an exam. This preliminary diagnosis is subsequently refined by asking additional questions. (Wallace Abstract).

The additional questions in Wallace, however, do not include “... **information corresponding to another cause of image degradation,**” as recited in claim 1. Rather, the questions in Wallace are **only based on the determined cause of deficiency** in test taking to improve the user’s skills. For example, if it is determined that a user is deficient in analogies questions by the way a user has responded to a set of analogies questions, additional questions are given with analogies type codes to improve the user’s skills with analogies. (Para. [0063]). That is, if it is determined that a user has a particular deficiency, Wallace does not ask questions corresponding to another cause of deficiency in test taking. Thus, Wallace does not disclose or suggest outputting “... **a question including information corresponding to another cause of image degradation** of the plurality of stored causes of image degradation based on the question-cause correspondence table,” as recited in claim 1.

Claims 2-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka and Kondo. Claims 2-4 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka and Matsushita. Claim 5 is allowable, however, because it ultimately depends from allowable claim 1.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Kondo and Flom et al. The rejection of claim 6 is moot, however, due to the cancellation of claim 6.

Claims 7-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka and Uchida. Claims 7-8 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

Claims 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka, Kondo and Matsushita. Claims 9-11 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

Claims 12-14 and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka, Kondo and Uchida. Claims 12-14 and 20-22 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

Claims 15 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka, Matsushita and Uchida. Claims 15 and 23 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

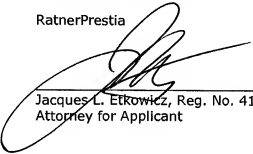
Claims 16 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Flom et al., Kondo and Uchida. The rejection of claims 16 and 24 are moot, however, do the cancellation of these claims.

Claims 17-19 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being obvious in view of Umezawa, Wallace et al., Ishizuka, Kondo, Matsushita and Uchida. Claims 17-19 and 25-27 are allowable, however, because they ultimately depend from allowable claim 1.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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